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RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2350
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 6874
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: CHIEF CEASEFIRE MONITOR DESCRIBES
CONSTRAINTS TO MISSION

REF: COLOMBO 1483 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert O. Blake for reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) Ambassador Blake called on the new Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM) Chief, Major General Lars Solvberg, on September 19 to discuss the mission's operational structure and constraints since reducing the number of its monitors from approximately 60 to 30 on September 1 (reftel).

(Note: The reduction followed the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's (LTTE) refusal to guarantee the safety of monitors from EU-member countries after the EU's May 30 designation of the LTTE as a terrorist organization.) Solvberg expressed concern that neither the Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) nor the LTTE heeded the SLMM's rulings on Ceasefire Agreement (CFA) violations and were using the CFA period to regroup behind their initial causes.

Fewer Field Offices, More Violations

12. (C) Apart from the 12-monitor headquarters in Colombo, the SLMM operates district offices (DO), each manned by four monitors, in Jaffna, Trincomalee, and LTTE-controlled Kilinochchi. The Vavuniya DO incorporated the Mannar DO after September 1. Likewise, the Batticaloa DO incorporated the former Ampara DO. Field officers in a total of five district offices are tasked with inquiring into allegations of ceasefire violations, but are reliant upon information provided by the parties to the conflict and public sources, Solvberg said.

13. (C) The SLMM feels increasingly strained due to the rising number of CFA violations by both the GSL and the LTTE since July 2006. The SLMM has ruled that the LTTE has violated the CFA more than 3,000 times since 2002, particularly by harassment of Tamil civilians and recruitment of child soldiers. Until July 2006, Solvberg added, the GSL had approximately 200 violations, but that number has risen toward 250 during the recent military engagement. "An incident of security forces harassing a civilian at a check point is tallied the same as the LTTE blowing up a civilian bus - one violation," Solvberg clarified. "Therefore it's not useful to concentrate on the numbers." Essentially, a

30-member mission is inadequate in the current situation, he explained. Asked about prospects for plussing up the SLMM, Solvberg replied that the main obstacle is that the CFA would have to be amended to allow new countries to contribute to the monitors. If the parties were to agree, they might seek to amend the CFA in a number of other less helpful ways. The SLMM is still thinking about how to proceed.

Limited Mandate

¶4. (C) "A deficiency" in the SLMM's operational ability, Solveberg told the Ambassador, is that its "mandate is too limited to make the parties transparent." The SLMM can inquire into violations but not run independent investigations. He explained that the SLMM is limited to "public information and what the parties tell us. We lack objective knowledge and intelligence." Solvberg lamented, "Nothing ever comes of our rulings. The CFA is useful to both parties because it gives them the opportunity to rearm and regroup. But they haven't forgotten their causes."

Deteriorating Relationship With GSL

¶5. (C) General Solvberg noted that the relationship between the SLMM and the GSL has deteriorated over the last month "for understandable reasons;" in other words, the GSL was outraged by outgoing SLMM chief Swedish General Ulf Henricsson's public implication of GSL security forces in the August murders of 17 Tamil staff members of a French NGO in the eastern town of Muttur (reftel). Solvberg added, "I'm

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thinking about how to utilize the most significant players - India and the US, as well as the Co-chairs" to improve the functioning and image of the SLMM.

¶6. (C) Comment: Despite the SLMM's limited mandate and reduced presence, its role of calling publicly to task the parties to the conflict is an essential one. Solvberg is still thinking about how to structure and operate the SLMM. The Ambassador pledged the USG's strong support and told Solvberg we would welcome ideas of how the US might help. End Comment.

BLAKE